

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor	1
National Youth Service Day Draws 8,000	2
Community Profile	2
Penn Quarter Breakfast on Economic Development	3
House of Sweden Groundbreaking	3
Historic Synagogue Rededicated	4
Mayor's Week in Review	4
District Activities	5
Community News	5
Upcoming Events	6

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE MAYOR
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
<http://dc.gov>

Message from the Mayor

Earlier this month, I joined residents, local leaders and others to commemorate the 142nd Anniversary of Emancipation Day for the District of Columbia. This commemoration tied directly into the fact that the residents of the District still lack one of the most fundamental rights in this country: voting.

Enslaved people in the District were the "first freed" individuals, as America's Civil War was already underway. So this celebration for our city was particularly noteworthy and historical. During the week of April 12, our city hosted several events to celebrate and commemorate the history and importance of this occasion to the residents of the District of Columbia.

There were several important educational activities in celebration of Emancipation Day. There were forums at the University of the District of Columbia that focused on slavery, slave trade, and the abolitionist movement in the District of Columbia. And we held a parade on Pennsylvania Avenue from 4th Street to 14th Street. The parade included participation by our public schools, police officers from local jurisdictions, and various community organizations.

After the parade, we held an inspiring program on Freedom Plaza with dancers, choirs, bands, poets and story tellers. That led into a spectacular evening concert on Freedom Plaza featuring Grammy Award winning recording artist, Regina Belle.

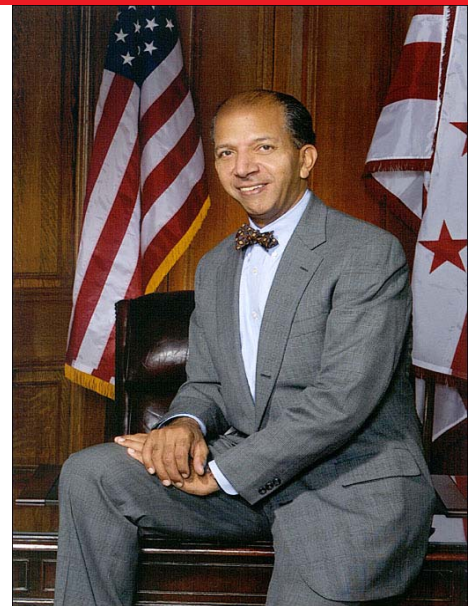
While we celebrated our freedom here in the District, it's important to understand that our residents still live with unnecessary restrictions. Our tireless quest for full voting rights and representation in the US Congress is alive and well. Many of us lived through the Civil Rights Movement. We saw the injustice in South Africa with Apartheid. But here in the nation's capital, we still live as disenfranchised citizens.

This is a disgrace. Martin Luther King said it best when he said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." It's a tragedy that the citizens who live in the shadow of the US Capitol have been denied their representative government for more than 200 years.

From his desk in the White House, President Kennedy declared in his civil rights address that our nation should have no second class citizens and that "this Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free." Yet the residents who live in the shadow of the White House are not fully free!

If democracy has prevailed throughout our country, then democracy must prevail in our nation's capital.

A special thanks is in order for Councilmember Vincent Orange from Ward 5 who introduced legislation in the Council to make DC Emancipation Day a private legal holiday in the District.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

National Youth Service Day Draws 8,000

On April 16, I helped kick off the celebration for the 16th Annual National Youth Service Day.

National Youth Service Day, the largest service event in the District, took place April 16 – 18. This is the signature event for Serve DC, formally known as the DC Commission on National and Community Service. More than 8,000 youth volunteers in the District helped lead 75 service projects throughout the weekend.

The mission of National Youth Service Day is to mobilize youth to identify and address the needs of their communities through service; recruit the next generation of volunteers; and promote the benefits of youth service to the American public. It is a national program of Youth Service America.

Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." How true his words are today. All of our volunteers are busy losing themselves in service, and finding themselves in the process. They helped make National Youth Service Day the largest volunteer event in the history of the District of Columbia.

Our city's volunteers understand that service meets the needs of our community. Reading to a child teaches the importance of literacy. Renovating a school provides needed repairs. And assisting the homeless builds compassion.

Serve DC has organized National Youth Service Day for three consecutive years and quadrupled the number of young people involved. Their success is due to generous sponsors including the Freddie Mac Foundation and Nike, Inc.

One of the new initiatives of Serve DC is the leadership of the DC Youth Advisory Council—a group of young people who advise me and other civic leaders on laws, policies and issues that impact youth. I urge our readers to consider applying to be a part of this important program. Information is available at <http://serve.dc.gov>.

Community Profile

Christina Russell

Ward 3 resident Christina Russell has been using her time and talent to improve conditions in DC public schools and to raise money for college scholarships through Hands on DC for the past four years. Hands on DC is an all-volunteer project that creates better schools and brighter futures for students in the District of Columbia. Thousands of volunteers gather each spring for the one-day work-a-thon to spruce up gardens, paint school walls, and raise scholarship money.

"The more I got involved, the more I understood how great the organization really is," Christina said. As the co-director this year, Christina oversees all aspects of the 2004 campaign including fundraising, publicity and grassroots communication, recruiting new volunteers, coordinating school projects, and rally planning.



Christina Russell

Christina received a Master of Education in Social Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and is currently a research associate focusing on studies related to youth development, school reform initiatives, community engagement and service learning. Although her background is in education, Christina pointed out that anyone can join Hands on DC and that the organization depends on a diverse bank of volunteer skill sets. "DC is a city known to be filled with extremely talented and active young professionals," Christina said. "We all share a common goal of improving our surrounding community."

Christina spent the past two years leading the Hands on DC recruitment committee, which has attracted more than 2,000 volunteers each year. Since 1995 more than 19,000 volunteers have worked in over 100 local schools and have collected more than \$400,000 to help local students pay for further education. One hundred percent of the funds raised by Hands on DC volunteers go to College Bound, a nonprofit organization that helps hundreds of students pursue their dreams of a college education. Last year, volunteers raised \$12,000 in pledges for scholarships, and expect to raise even more this year. For more information about Hands on DC, visit www.handsondc.org.

Christina is the November 2003 adult winner of the Mayor's Community Service Award, sponsored by Serve DC. If you would like to nominate a youth or adult for the monthly award, visit <http://serve.dc.gov> for nomination information, or call (202) 727-9461.



LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

[DC Agenda](#)

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

Penn Quarter Breakfast on Economic Development

On April 21, I served as the guest speaker at the April Penn Quarter Breakfast. Each month, our city's active Penn Quarter neighborhood holds a breakfast meeting at a business in the Penn Quarter. This month's breakfast took place at the Shakespeare Theater.

I updated the audience on some of our economic development efforts here in the District, and I'll share them with our readers here.

We're making good progress on plans for a Washington Convention Center hotel. The hotel is in the conceptual design process. Right now, we're wrestling with the number of rooms, the square footage of ballroom and meeting room space—and the issue of expansion space for the new convention center.

In May, we'll send legislation to the Council to create the entity we need to sell the bonds for the hotel. The District's plan is to own the headquarters hotel. This way, the hotel can be built without a large cash subsidy—and the District can collect \$12-15 million in new income for its residents.

We are also very excited about the team that will work on the former convention center. Hines/Smith/Georgetown represents the best in the development field and has assembled a team that includes Sir Norman Foster, who is designing our project. He is a "Pritzger" prize winner and one of the best designers in the world.

When the redevelopment is completed, our preliminary estimate suggests the Hines/Smith/Georgetown project will generate \$15 to \$20 million in new property, sales and income taxes annually. Moreover, this project will create a new destination downtown—an 18-hour neighborhood with retail, restaurants, entertainment, housing and culture for all ages and income levels.

On April 23, our city's newest museum opened in the Penn Quarter. The Koshland Science Museum opened at 6th and E Streets. Koshland expects 50,000 – 80,000 visitors in its first year. With 22 million visitors on the Mall every year, Koshland is another magnet that can help pull people into Downtown—into the core of the District.

House of Sweden Groundbreaking

On April 23, I helped break ground on what will soon be the District's newest beautiful building on the banks of the Potomac River: the House of Sweden and the Swedish Embassy.

The House of Sweden will become a perfect arena for the diplomatic process as well as for events, exhibitions, seminars and cultural activities open to the public. The site—just north of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and next to the Washington Harbour—is a perfect location for such purposes.

The design is the result of a major competition among Swedish architects which was won by architects Gert Wingardh and Tomas Hansen of the Swedish firm Wingardh Architects. At the event, the words of the great thinker George Bernard Shaw came to mind. He once said, "Some men see things as they are and say, "Why?" I dream of things that never were and say, "Why not?"

How fitting his words were for the groundbreaking and for how we're transforming Washington, DC block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood. As we stood on the banks of the Potomac River, I said with pride that our city has entered a bold new era. It's an era of magnificent development that is turning Washington into one of the most sought after destinations in the world.

Our downtown has become the home of our region's entertainment—with the expansion of the Shakespeare Theater and the opening of dozens of new restaurants in the last year alone.

And consider our Georgetown neighborhood. One year ago, we opened the Ritz Carlton development. That building is a symbol of how we can preserve history while creating something entirely new and thriving for our city.

In recent years, the Georgetown neighborhood has rallied together in one of the most complex and challenging infrastructure projects ever accomplished in our city: The Georgetown Project. Like that project, The House of Sweden is a testament to what we can do when we put our heads together.



Historic Synagogue Rededicated

April 22 was a great day for our city. I joined local leaders, residents and others to help “re-dedicate” the Sixth & I Historic Synagogue near Gallery Place.

The synagogue was built in 1908 as a second home for the Adas Israel Congregation. Moorish, Byzantine and Romanesque design influences were used to reflect the thriving Jewish community of the area at that time.

After World War II, the synagogue was sold to the Turner Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 2002, that church relocated, and the building was purchased by three local businessmen—Abe Pollin, Shelton Zuckerman and Doug Jemal. They in turn restored and renewed the building to where it stands today.

The synagogue enhances Jewish life in the District by providing a place where individuals, groups and organizations from all branches of Judaism may gather to worship, study and socialize.

As business, retail and residential life experience a rebirth in the neighborhood, the Sixth & I Historic Synagogue represents the continued revitalization of the city’s downtown core—a beautiful and meaningful link between the city’s past, present and future.

The synagogue is a spectacular building, and I’m glad that it could be saved and preserved as a part of our city’s history. The revitalization and preservation of this synagogue is in many ways an inspiration. As we continue to develop and revitalize our downtown, preserving its history is critical to our success as a city.

Mayor’s Week in Review

Mayor Makes Remarks at Bill Signing

On **April 21**, I signed into law the Language Access Act, which helps our immigrant community navigate our city government.

Mayor Appears on WTOP Radio

On **April 22**, I appeared on my regular WTOP “Ask The Mayor” program.

Mayor Delivers Remarks at Capital Cleanup

On **April 22**, I delivered Earth Day remarks in Southwest at The Capital River Relief Project’s *Team Up to Clean Up*—a partnership of environmental groups, community and government organizations.

Mayor Delivers Remarks at Telecommunications Seminar

On **April 23**, I delivered remarks at Georgetown University at the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) seminar.

Mayor Makes Remarks at Health Center on Capitol Hill

On **April 24**, I spoke at the grand opening of the Capital Breast Care Center on Capitol Hill.

Mayor Attends Annual Dinner

On **April 24**, I spoke at the National Latino Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organization annual dinner.

Mayor Visits Far Southeast Family Collaborative

On **April 24**, I gave remarks at the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative 2004 Annual Meeting.

Mayor Speaks at Planning Conference

On **April 25**, I addressed the American Planning Association’s National Planning Conference.



District Activities



Councilmember Vincent Orange joined Mayor Williams on stage on April 16 during the Emancipation Day festivities. Mayor Williams issued a proclamation declaring April 16, 2004 Emancipation Day in the District.



On April 19, Mayor Williams held a rally for support for his education reform plan on the steps of the John A. Wilson Building.



On April 15, Mayor Williams joined others at the unveiling of the Walter Washington Archway at George Washington University.



On April 17, Mayor Williams helped out at an Anacostia River Earth Day Cleanup and Celebration and then presented awards to winners of the Anacostia Watershed Society's poetry and poster contest.

Community News

- [Final Report of Task Force on Lead in Drinking Water Released](#)
- [Mayor Williams Signs Language Access Act](#)
- [Mayor Announces Departure of Deputy Mayor Kellems](#)

[View all News Releases](#)



Upcoming Events

5/01	Sixth Annual DDOT/DPW Equipment Rodeo 8 am - 2 pm RFK Stadium, Lots 6 & 7
5/03	WASA Community Meeting 6:15 pm Chevy Chase Branch Library 5625 Connecticut Avenue, NW For more information, visit www.dcwasa.com
5/06	40th Annual Senior Citizens' Day and Health Expo 11 am - 2 pm DC Armory 2001 East Capitol Street, SE District residents 60 years of age and older can call (202) 727-6604 for more information.
5/07	Bike to Work Day 8 am - Rally Freedom Plaza Pennsylvania Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets, NW For more information, call (202) 797-3510
5/11 to 5/15	Golden Olympics Various Locations For more information, call (202) 282-0753
5/19	WASA Community Meeting 6:30 pm Watha T. Daniel/Shaw Branch Library 1701 - 8th Street, NW For more information, visit www.dcwasa.com

